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## Report on the 2011 ANHS Members meeting

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# REPORT ON THE ANHS MEMBERS MEETING

## SAINT PAUL, MN OCTOBER 2011

The 2011 Annual Members' Meeting of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan studies was held on October 29, 2011 in Olin Rice Hall at Macalester College, during the First Himalayan Studies Conference organized by the Association. The President Geoff Childs opened the meeting at 12:25 pm, welcoming the large crowd of 67 people present, and encouraging them to enjoy the lunch ANHS was providing. After introducing the Executive Council members, he reviewed the previous year's activities and successes. He noted that these activities show the vitality of our organization.

ANHS was accepted as a "developing" member of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), and secured a grant from CAORC to sponsor this Himalayan Studies Conference and the Himalayan Lecture Series featuring Pratyoush Onta. This series has allowed Dr. Onta to present lectures at Dartmouth, Cornell, University of Illinois – Chicago, Washington University, and to continue the series with the conference's plenary talk and with presentations at Macalester and Yale this coming week.

The Association has continued the Senior Fellowship Award for the second year. Megan Adamson Sijapati then announced that this year's \$1500 award went to Amanda Snellinger for her research project "Transfiguration of the Political: From Student Activist to Politician in the 'New Nepal.'"

Geoff Childs then asked Sienna Craig, who had chaired the competition for our Dor Bahadur Bista prize for the best graduate student paper, to report on the committee's selection. Sienna praised the papers that had been submitted, and congratulated Sarah Besky as this year's winner. Sienna then encouraged the graduate students present to submit papers in 2012, and urged graduate student advisors to have their students submit.

Finally, Geoff explained that he and John Mock had written and submitted to the Department of Education a \$450,000 proposal for future conferences, lectures series, and other research promoting projects, but that shortly after they submitted their proposal, the Department of Education announced that budget cuts would force them to cancel all grants under this particular program for the foreseeable future.

### **HIMALAYA REPORT**

Geoff then invited Arjun Guneratne, the editor of our flagship journal *Himalaya*, to present his report. Arjun announced that the latest volume (Volume 30),

is complete and in the mail to ANHS members. He is particularly pleased with the high quality of the papers in this volume on "Development in Tibet." The volume is the result of a session on Tibet at a conference in 2010 and was guest edited by Kenneth Bauer, Geoff Childs, Sienna Craig, and Andrew Fischer. Arjun encouraged organizers of panels at this and other conferences to consider revising their papers and submitting them as a special, guest edited issue of *Himalaya*. Regarding Volume 31, Arjun has several articles accepted and is waiting for the peer reviews of several others to be returned. He expects this volume to be published in the spring of 2012. He urged those present who are not members to fill in the membership form included in the conference packet and become members so they can participate in ANHS and get *Himalaya*. He announced that Tom Robertson has stepped down as Book Review Editor and that Jessica Vantine Birkenholtz has agreed to replace him. Arjun urged members to submit articles and be willing to peer review article submissions and books.

Finally, Arjun will be giving up the editorship in October 2012, so we need a new editor. He asked members to seriously consider volunteering to take his place. He has begun to explore whether it could be advantageous to ANHS to have a commercial or university press publish *Himalaya*. Such an arrangement would free the editor from the onerous tasks of copy-editing, organizing the layout, and marketing of the journal. He also informed members that the Association is working with Social Science Baha and Himal Books to reprint articles appearing in *Himalaya* as books for the Nepal market, under the rubric of a book series, *The Himalaya Series in Nepal Studies*.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Next John Mock made his Treasure's Report. He distributed a summary of the organization's expenses and income. ANHS had a \$20,000 balance at the end of the third quarter on 30 September 2011. To those who have been members for a long time, this number is enormous. We must realize, however, that we have not yet paid all the expenses of this conference and the Himalayan Lecture Series, so the fourth quarter balance will be lower. He encouraged those present who are not yet members to join the organization by filling out the membership form in the conference program and leaving it and a check with us or by using PayPal to join. Membership materials are also on the ANHS website, which Milan Shrestha has done such a fine job of creating and maintaining. There were no

questions for John.

Geoff told the meeting that John Mock was stepping down as Treasurer and that Mary Cameron was taking over. Geoff also announced that the organization's bookkeeper, Kim O'Neil is also stepping down. He emphasized how essential Kim has been to professionalizing our finances. She inherited a mix of accounts, but has organized the disparate bank accounts and financial information so that her replacement will easily be able to keep ANHS' finances transparent.

Geoff then announced that the Executive Council had commissioned a plaque to recognize the extraordinary contribution that John Mock and Kim O'Neil have made to ANHS. He again thanked them on behalf of the entire organization.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF ANHS**

Next, Geoff Childs led a discussion of the future directions of ANHS. He noted that we have begun to fulfill our long-time commitment to engage with scholars in the Himalayan region. We have opened an office in Kathmandu in collaboration with Social Science Baha (SSB). ANHS has secured provisional status as a member of CAORC, which has already led to funding for this conference and the Himalayan Lecture Series. Former ANHS President Mahendra Lawoti and former co-editor of our journal, David Holmberg, secured funding from the Open Society Institute and Swiss Embassy in Kathmandu to assist SSB in having an international conference in August of this year. SSB has proposed to us and to European colleagues that we co-sponsor an annual research conference in Nepal, like this year's one in August. Deepak Thapa of SSB notes that many scholars are already in the region doing research during summers, so participants should be available. Mahendra added that Martin Chautari, another research group, wants to participate as well. Drona Rasali said that we should focus on improving young Nepali scholars' ability to do research and write about it. Sara Shneiderman suggested that the workload of such a conference might be more manageable if we do it biennially. Geoff cautioned that before deciding to undertake such a commitment, ANHS must do a final accounting of this year's activities and assess whether we can carry off an annual conference in Nepal. Perhaps we can alternate a conference in the Himalayan region with one here in the US.

### **EXPANDING THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Geoff then explained that the increased workload of our expanded activities has led the EC to propose a constitutional amendment to enlarge the EC beyond the current 9 members mandated by the Constitution. We will email ballots in November to all current members to seek approval to allow the membership to range between 9 and 13. We are also seeking members who are not on the EC to help with committee work. A successful example was Mark Turin's work on this year's committee selecting the Dor Bahadur Bista award.

### **2012 CONFERENCE**

Finally, Geoff said we must decide where we will meet next year. We had planned to meet at the South Asia Conference in Madison, but just this morning he learned that the MCAA plans to have its 2012 annual conference at Western Michigan University. Since Western Michigan is Mahendra's home, should we plan to join MCAA again? Their conference will be between 21st and 23rd September 2012. David Gellner noted that the earlier date would make it easier for European scholars to attend. Susan Hangen asked what impact such a choice would have on CAORC, and Geoff replied that CAORC supports the organizing of conferences. John Mock cautioned that organizing our own conference costs more than going to Madison. Sienna suggested we also consider scheduling our conference with that of Tibetan Studies, which meets every 3 to 4 years. Sara Shneiderman recommended we consider alternate conferences between Madison and other venues, and Barbara Brower agreed, noting that many members find that the non-Himalayan sessions in Madison inform and complement their Himalayan work. Kath March noted that at the Madison conference, our sessions tend to be diffused throughout the conference; perhaps we can negotiate with the Madison conference organizers to have our sessions structured into a parallel mini-conference. Geoff concluded that he will explore the parallel conference with the Madison organizers. Regarding possible venues for next year's conference, the Executive Council will continue discussing them in January and notify the membership of their decision.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15.

John Metz,  
Secretary